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GOVERNOR

From: Secretary of Education Beth Purvis, Office of the Governor
To: Chairman James T. Meeks, Illinois State Board of Education
Cc: Superintendent Tony Smith, Illinois State Board of Education
Date: February 1, 2016
Re: CPS Financial Data and Independent Authority Candidates – SB 2275/HB 4498

Last week week, SB 2275 and HB 4498 were introduced by Senator Christine Radogno and Representative Jim Durkin, respectively. These legislators are concerned about the continued financial challenges of the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and the effects of financial distress on current and future students. If enacted, their legislation would add CPS to ISBE's existing authority to remove board members of distressed school districts and replace them with an Independent Authority.

Given continued reports of the rapidly deteriorating financial situation at CPS, ISBE must be ready to move should Chicago officials run out of options and the General Assembly enacts the Radogno-Durkin legislation. To help in that preparation:

- ISBE should begin assessing available financial data to determine whether or not CPS meets any of the criteria set out in paragraphs (1) through (5) of subsection (b) of Section 1A-8 of the School Code. If ISBE does not have access to necessary CPS financial data, ISBE should consider making official requests for such information in order to help make final determinations.
- ISBE should move quickly to identify potential Independent Authority candidates who are well-qualified to step into CPS and protect students and taxpayers alike. If ISBE does not currently have the internal capacity to identify, recruit, and interview members of the Independent Authority, we should work together to complete this important process.

Please let me know if the Governor's Office can be of assistance in any way as you and your team work to better understand the implications of SB 2275/HB 4498 for CPS and ISBE.